session, I ask unanimous consent to discharge the Judiciary Committee from further consideration of the nomination of Bonnie Campbell, the nominee for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals; that her nomination be considered by the Senate immediately following the conclusion of action on the pending matter; that debate on the nomination be limited to 2 hours equally divided; and that a vote on her nomination occur immediately following the use or yielding back of that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At the request of the majority leader and in my individual capacity as a United States Senator, I object.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, every day I raise it and every day the Republican majority objects. It is still a shame that Bonnie Campbell has been tied up in that committee since May. She has had her hearing. She has done a great job running the Violence Against Women office. Everyone agrees on that. She would be an outstanding circuit court judge. No one doubts her qualifications. Yet the Judiciary Committee refuses to report out her name.

It is really a disservice to her and to our country, and it is really a disgrace on this body that her name continues to be bottled up in the Judiciary Committee.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AN EXCERPT FROM PAT CONROY'S UPCOMING BOOK, ''MY LOSING SEASON''

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I was recently given a copy of an excerpt from a yet unpublished book written by South Carolina native and former Citadel graduate, Mr. Pat Conroy. This essay is an insightful tribute to the men and women who served their country in times of conflict, and I would like to take this opportunity to bring this exceptional essay to the attention of my colleagues.

Mr. Conroy's composition recounts the experiences of a courageous man who answered his nation's call to serve in the armed forces during a time of conflict, and the intense pride he had in his country even during the most dire of circumstances as a POW. It also recounts how, through the author's interaction with this patriotic individual, Mr. Conroy arrived at the realization that duty to one's country is an obligation that comes with the privilege of being a citizen.

This dramatic composition honors those who accepted their duty with courage and dignity, and I ask unanimous consent that this poignant essay be inserted into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MY HEART'S CONTENT

(By Pat Conroy)

The true things always ambush me on the road and take me by surprise when I am drifting down the light of placid days, careless about flanks and rearguard actions. I was not looking for a true thing to come upon me in the state of New Jersey. Nothing has ever happened to me in New Jersey. But came it did, and it came to stay.

In the past four years I have been interviewing my teammates on the 1966–67 basketball team at the Citadel for a book I'm writing. For the most part, this has been like buying back a part of my past that I had mislaid or shut out of my life. At first I thought I was writing about being young and frisky and able to run up and down a court all day long, but lately I realized I came to this book because I needed to come to grips with being middle-aged and having ripened into a gray-haired man you could not trust to handle the ball on a fast break.

When I visited my old teammate Al Kroboth's house in New Jersey, I spent the first hours quizzing him about his memories of games and practices and the screams of coaches that had echoed in field houses more than 30 years before. Al had been a splendid forward-center for the Citadel; at 6 feet 5 inches and carrying 220 pounds, he played with indefatigable energy and enthusiasm. For most of his senior year, he led the nation in field-goal percentage, with UCLA center Lew Alcindor hot on his trail. Al was a battler and a brawler and a scrapper from the day he first stepped in as a Green Weenie as a sophomore to the day he graduated. After we talked basketball, we came to a subject I dreaded to bring up with Al, but which lay between us and would not lie still.

''Al, you know I was a draft dodger and antiwar demonstrator.''

''That's what I heard, Conroy,'' Al said. ''I have nothing against what you did, but I did what I thought was right.''

''Tell me about Vietnam, big Al. Tell me what happened to you,'' I said.

On his seventh mission as a navigator in an A–6 for Major Leonard Robertson, Al was getting ready to deliver their payload when the fighter-bomber was hit by enemy fire. Though Al has no memory of it, he punched out somewhere in the middle of the ill-fated dive and lost consciousness. He doesn't know if he was unconscious for six hours or six days, nor does he know what happened to Major Robertson (whose name is engraved on the Wall in Washington and on the MIA bracelet Al wears).

When Al awoke, he couldn't move. A Viet Cong soldier held an AK–47 to his head. His back and his neck were broken, and he had shattered his left scapula in the fall. When he was well enough to get to his feet (he still can't recall how much time had passed), two armed Viet Cong led Al from the jungles of South Vietnam to a prison in Hanoi. The journey took three months. Al Kroboth walked barefooted through the most impassable terrain in Vietnam, and he did it sometimes in the dead of night. He bathed when it rained, and he slept in bomb craters with his two Viet Cong captors. As they moved farther north, infections began to erupt on his body, and his legs were covered with leeches picked up while crossing the rice paddies.

At the very time of Al's walk, I had a small role in organizing the only antiwar demonstration ever held in Beaufort, South Carolina, the home of Parris Island and the Marine Corps Air Station. In a Marine Corps town at that time, it was difficult to come up with a quorum of people who had even minor disagreements about the Vietnam War. But my small group managed to attract a crowd of about 150 to Beaufort's waterfront. With my mother and my wife on either side of me, we listened to the featured speaker, Dr. Howard Levy, suggest to the very few young enlisted marines present that if they get sent to Vietnam, here's how they can help end this war: Roll a grenade under your officer's bunk when he's asleep in his tent. It's called fragging and is becoming more and more popular with the ground troops who know this war is bullshit. I was enraged by the suggestion. At that very moment my father, a marine officer, was asleep in Vietnam. But in 1972, at the age of 27, I thought I was serving America's interests by pointing out what massive flaws and miscalculations and corruptions had led her to conduct a ground war in Southeast Asia.

In the meantime, Al and his captors had finally arrived in the North, and the Viet Cong traded him to North Vietnamese soldiers for the final leg of the trip to Hanoi. Many times when they stopped to rest for the night, the local villagers tried to kill him. His captors wired his hands behind his back at night, so he trained himself to sleep in the center of huts when the villagers began sticking knives and bayonets into the thin walls. Following the U.S. air raids, old women would come into the huts to excrete on him and yank out hunks of his hair. After the nightmare journey of his walk north, Al was relieved when his guards finally delivered him to the POW camp in Hanoi and the cell door locked behind him.

It was at the camp that Al began to die. He threw up every meal he ate and before long was misidentified as the oldest American soldier in the prison because his appearance was so gaunt and skeletal. But the extraordinary camaraderie among fellow prisoners that sprang up in all the POW camps caught fire in Al, and did so in time to save his life.

When I was demonstrating in America against Nixon and the Christmas bombings in Hanoi, Al and his fellow prisoners were holding hands under the full fury of those bombings, singing ''God Bless America.'' It was those bombs that convinced Hanoi they would do well to release the American POWs, including my college teammate. When he told me about the C–141 landing in Hanoi to pick up the prisoners, Al said he felt no emotion, none at all, until he saw the giant American flag painted on the plane's tail. I stopped writing as Al wept over the memory of that flag on that plane, on that morning, during that time in the life of America.

It was that same long night, after listening to Al's story, that I began to make judgments about how I had conducted myself during the Vietnam War. In the darkness of the sleeping Kroboth household, lying in the third-floor guest bedroom, I began to assess my role as a citizen in the '60s, when my country called my name and I shot her the bird. Unlike the stupid boys who wrapped themselves in Viet Cong flags and burned the American one, I knew how to demonstrate against the war without flirting with treason or astonishingly bad taste. I had come directly from the warrior culture of this country and I knew how to act. But in the 25 years that have passed since South Vietnam fell, I have immersed myself in the study of totalitarianism during the unspeakable century we just left behind. I have questioned survivors of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, talked to Italians who told me tales of the Nazi occupation, French partisans who had counted German tanks in the forests of Normandy, and officers who survived the Bataan

Death March. I quiz journalists returning from wars in Bosnia, the Sudan, the Congo, Angola, Indonesia, Guatemala, San Salvador, Chile, Northern Ireland, Algeria. As I lay sleepless, I realized I'd done all this research to better understand my country. I now revere words like democracy, freedom, the right to vote, and the grandeur of the extraordinary vision of the founding fathers. Do I see America's flaws? Of course. But I now can honor her basic, incorruptible virtues, the ones that let me walk the streets screaming my ass off that my country had no idea what it was doing in South Vietnam. My country let me scream to my heart's content—the same country that produced both Al Kroboth and me.

Now, at this moment in New Jersey, I come to a conclusion about my actions as a young man when Vietnam was a dirty word to me. I wish I'd led a platoon of marines in Vietnam. I would like to think I would have trained my troops well and that the Viet Cong would have had their hands full if they entered a firefight with us. From the day of my birth, I was programmed to enter the Marine Corps. I was the son of a marine fighter pilot, and I had grown up on marine bases where I had watched the men of the corps perform simulated war games in the forests of my childhood. That a novelist and poet bloomed darkly in the house of Santini strikes me as a remarkable irony. My mother and father had raised me to be an Al Kroboth, and during the Vietnam era they watched in horror as I metamorphosed into another breed of fanatic entirely. I understand now that I should have protested the war after my return from Vietnam, after I had done my duty for my country. I have come to a conclusion about my country that I knew then in my bones but lacked the courage to act on: America is good enough to die for even when she is wrong.

I looked for some conclusion, a summation of this trip to my teammate's house. I wanted to come to the single right thing, a true thing that I may not like but that I could live with. After hearing Al Kroboth's story of his walk across Vietnam and his brutal imprisonment in the North, I found myself passing harrowing, remorseless judgment on myself. I had not turned out to be the man I had once envisioned myself to be. I thought I would be the kind of man that America could point to and say, ''There. That's the guy. That's the one who got it right. The whole package. The one I can depend on.'' It had never once occurred to me that I would find myself in the position I did on that night in Al Kroboth's house in Roselle, New Jersey: an American coward spending the night with an American hero.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CLAYTON O. MITCHELL, JR., CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS, UNITED STATES NAVY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to recognize and bid farewell to an outstanding naval officer, Lieutenant Commander Clayton O. Mitchell, Jr., upon his departure from my staff. Lieutenant Commander Mitchell has truly epitomized the ''Can Do'' spirit of the Seabees and Navy core values of honor, courage, and commitment during his assignment as a Navy Legislative Fellow on my staff. He has been a valued team member who has had an enduring impact upon the State of Mississippi. He will be sorely missed.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell reported to my staff from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Seventy Four, a Seabee battalion homeported in my home State of Mississippi. As operations officer for the ''Fearless'' Seabees of NMCB 74, he directed the military and construction operations for the unit at 11 deployment sites throughout the Atlantic coast, Caribbean, and Central America in addition to leading disaster recovery efforts in the aftermath of hurricane Georges. He spearheaded recovery operations which helped clear roads and restore vital services at Construction Battalion Center Gulfport and the Mississippi Gulf Coast within 24 hours.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell is a 1985 industrial engineering graduate of California Polytechnic State University (Cal-Poly), San Luis Obispo. He was commissioned as an Ensign through the Officer Candidate School at Newport, Rhode Island after working two years as an engineer for Rockwell International. He began his career as a Navy Civil Engineer Corps officer with Chesapeake Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command as the Assistant Resident Officer in Charge of Construction, Andrews AFB, Maryland. He then reported to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Forty for two nine month deployments which included Assistant Officer in Charge, Detail Sigonella, Sicily and Officer in Charge, Detail Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territories.

After his first Seabee tour with NMCB Forty, Lieutenant Commander Mitchell then attended the University of California at Berkeley, earning a Master of Science degree in civil engineering. He followed Berkeley with an assignment to the United States Naval Academy as Shops Engineer in the Public Works Department, directing a 270 member workforce responsible for the Academy's facilities maintenance, transportation, and utilities operations.

His next challenge was as Facilities Planning Officer, Public Works Center, Yokosuka, Japan. In this capacity, he directed a host nation construction program with over $1.7 billion in projects under design and/or construction. He spearheaded execution of some of the Navy's most critical projects in Japan, including the delivery of 854 family housing units with the completion of the $1 billion Ikego family housing complex and a $41 million carrier pier at Yokosuka. For nine months during this tour, Lieutenant Commander Mitchell also served as Staff Civil Engineer to the Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan, where he was the Navy's ''go to'' man for facilities and civil engineering issues.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell has also made a significant impact in the various communities in which he has served. He directed a Mids'N'Kids tutorial/mentorship program, providing Annapolis youth with a midshipman sponsor and access to Naval Academy facilities on a weekly basis during the school year. As treasurer for the Samuel P. Massie Educational Endowment, he distributed over $35,000 in scholarship awards to Maryland college and university students. In 1995, he was recognized as the ''Volunteer of the Week for Father's Day'' by the Annapolis Capitol newspaper for his contributions in the community. In 1997, he was recognized by Black Engineer magazine with an ''Engineer of the Year: Special Recognition Award'' as one of the nation's promising young engineers of the future.

On my staff, he has established himself as a consummate professional providing guidance and oversight on a plethora of Department of Defense issues ranging from Defense health care, military construction, shipbuilding, and various weapons systems programs. His efforts also yielded over $100 million in research, development, test, and evaluation funds for Mississippi Universities.

Lieutenant Commander Mitchell is married to the former Karen Elaine Blackwell of Washington, D.C. and their family includes daughter, Kendra and son, Austin. He is a registered professional engineer in the Commonwealth of Virginia and a Seabee Combat Warfare qualified officer who enthusiastically returns to his Navy. I have appreciated greatly Lieutenant Commander Mitchell's contributions to my team and wish him fair winds and following seas in the future.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN C. NUNEZ, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding NASA Manager, Stephen C. Nunez, upon his departure from my staff. Mr. Nunez was selected as a NASA Congressional Fellow to work in my office because of his knowledge of the aerospace industry, NASA programs, and NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center in my home state of Mississippi. It is a privilege for me to recognize the many outstanding achievements he has provided for the United States Senate, NASA, and our great Nation.

During his NASA fellowship, Mr. Nunez worked on legislation affecting NASA, the aerospace industry, and veterans. He worked hard to ensure the NASA Authorization Bill and the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriation Bill for fiscal year 2001 included legislative provisions that will lead to the next generation of reusable launch vehicles. These initiatives will reduce the cost of getting payloads into orbit by a factor of 10. These provisions also support specific programs aimed at fostering the development of a robust U.S. propulsion industry, which includes rocket engine testing at the Stennis Space Center. Specifically, he helped ensure that NASA's Space Launch Initiative was fully funded in fiscal year 2001 at $290 million.

Mr. Nunez also worked to ensure that legislative provisions were included in